

# Worksession

<b>Agenda Item #</b>	11
<b>Meeting Date</b>	June 6, 2005
<b>Prepared By</b>	Suzanne Ludlow, Community & Government Liaison
<b>Approved By</b>	Barbara B. Matthews

<b>Discussion Item</b>	M-NCPPC Plans for Takoma-Piney Branch Park
<b>Background</b>	<p>Ellen Masciocchi and Andrew Frank of the Maryland-National Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) will be providing updated information to the plans for Takoma-Piney Branch Park presented to the City Council on March 7, 2005.</p> <p>A copy of the plan presented at the earlier meeting is attached. However, there were several small changes made to the plans based on comments from Councilmembers, community residents and agency staff. Ms. Masciocchi and Mr. Frank will review those changes and ask for support of the facility plan.</p> <p>The discussion of the plan before the Planning Board has been delayed to early July. M-NCPPC staff would like a resolution from the Takoma Park City Council to submit as part of the agenda packet for that item. If the plan is supported by the Planning Board, it is more likely to be included in the County's next Capital Improvement Program.</p>
<b>Policy</b>	The City Council is concerned with the nature of development in the City of Takoma Park.
<b>Fiscal Impact</b>	The City may be asked to contribute to the cost of a skateboard park in the location of the current tennis courts. Also, there may need to be some street modifications and signs installed by the City in the City right-of-way to encourage park patron use of the Darwin Avenue parking lot, rather than Grant Avenue.
<b>Attachments</b>	March version of park plan; draft Program of Requirements; draft resolution.
<b>Recommendation</b>	Give direction to staff; resolution tentatively scheduled to be brought to Council for action on June 20, 2005.
<b>Special Consideration</b>	The Planning Board is scheduled to review the park plan on July 7, 2005.



# **PROGRAM OF REQUIREMENTS**

For

Takoma – Piney Branch Local Park

The goal of the Facility Plan is to revitalize the existing active park by incorporating current design standards and potential environmental enhancements. To achieve the best possible park design, some of the existing park facilities will need renovation, redesign, or relocation.

## **Environmental Issues**

### **Vegetation**

- I. **Removal of invasive species** Invasive species are located around the perimeter of the park. The Park Manager has agreed to work with his staff to remove the invasive plants along the slope below the parking lot to enable greater security surveillance. Additional invasive removal to multiply the ‘eyes on the park’ is being considered as part of the construction phase. An effort to remove invasives within the Takoma Woods was made with a Community Block Grant in 2002. The aggressive plant material was removed along the natural surface trail and along the stream channel but is now beginning to come back in those areas.

### **Erosion/Storm Water Management**

- II. **Improve storm water management** The park renovation is being designed to incorporate multiple Best Management Practices (BMPs) throughout the site to treat runoff from existing and proposed impervious areas and reduce ongoing erosion problems.
- III. **Environmental Enhancements within Takoma Woods** M-NCPPC funded a report prepared by the Center for Watershed Protection (CWP) to explore options for potential environmental improvements within the Takoma Woods portion of the site, which included wetland creation, BMP implementation, and daylighting a portion of piped baseflow within the existing storm drain system. A committee will be formed with the City’s Department of Public Works and citizens to discuss the options identified by the CWP.

## **Passive Recreation**

### **Trails**

- Iç. **Natural Surface Trail improvements** Existing natural surface trails run through Takoma Woods (between the apartments on Maple Avenue and Takoma Middle School), which were rehabilitated through a Community Block Grant . This project proposes similar improvements to the natural surface trail between the apartments and the basketball court near the Piney Branch Elementary School. Additional minor repairs and trail signage are also being considered with the renovation.
- ç. **Hard Surface Trail** As part of this renovation an asphalt trail is being proposed to provide handicap accessibility throughout the park's non-wooded area. The community expressed interest in having a loop path around the park and the City's Recreation suggested that it be usable for roller bladers as well. Therefore, the renovation includes a looped trail and will provide distance markers for citizens who want to calculate how far they have walked.

### **Active Recreation**

#### **Tennis Courts Removal**

- çI. **Tennis court conversion** At the City's request, the Planning Board approved the conversion of the two tennis courts to a skateboard park that would be administered by the City Department of Recreation. The renovation project will include some modifications and resurfacing of this area in preparation for a skatepark, but no funding is currently available for the modular equipment that would need to be placed on the surface.

#### **Basketball Courts**

- çII. **Renovate basketball courts** The two basketball courts would be refurbished and remain in their current locations.

#### **Volleyball**

- çIII. The two grass volleyball courts located immediately adjacent to the basketball courts would be reduced to one reoriented court to prevent balls from going into the woods. The court may be adjusted to allow grading improvements around the area.

## **Baseball/Soccer Fields**

- IE. The existing fields are maintained by the City and appear to be in good condition. No modifications are proposed for these fields, except that one backstop closer to Grant Avenue may be relocated further away from the soccer field.

## **New Playground**

- E. *Provide a new playground* A new playground will replace an existing Par Course (exercise station) located near the school. This structure will be removed and a new play structure oriented to children from 8 to 12 years old will be installed. This will accommodate the prime users from the school (grades 3<sup>rd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup>).

## **Asphalt play area**

- EI. *Reduce hard surface play area* The asphalt area is in poor condition and needs resurfacing and re-striping. This area exceeds the amount of hard surface play area needed based on discussions with the school. Therefore, much of the western portion of the asphalt will be removed/reoriented and the area re-striped for various games.

## **Existing Playground**

- EII. *Improve existing playground* The current play area should be replaced in basically the same location, however, there will be some adjustment away from the trees to allow for an underground drain system. The play equipment will be oriented to children of varying ages including tots. Efforts will be made to limit impacts to the existing trees, while meeting current ADA and safety standards.

## **Other Issues**

### **Fencing**

- EIII. *Repair fencing* There is an existing fence, which surrounds the play areas of the park and is interrupted at certain points (such as the residential lots). This fence is in good condition and there is no need to replace most of the length. However, this project will include some maintenance and replacement as needed.

## Access

- ΞΙζ. **Police access** Aside from the parking lot to the north, access to the interior of the park is from Grant Avenue. Police currently use the existing drive to access up to the shelter, and this access will be maintained.
- Ξς. **ADA Access** Currently, there is no handicapped access to the park. This project includes provisions for handicap parking within Grant Avenue and a modified access route to the hard surface trail discussed above. Coordination will need to continue with the City regarding the ultimate construction of this access route based on the completion of the overall community center.
- ΞΙ. **Maintenance Access** Maintenance access will remain at the Grant Avenue entrance.

## Parking

- ΞςII. **Revision to parking lot** The main parking lot contains 56 spaces; however, the sizing does not meet current standards. No handicapped parking is provided and there is no possible way of providing ADA accessibility to the park from this lot as a result of grade issues. This project includes modifications to the parking lot to reduce excess asphalt and the addition of islands for shade and light poles. A plaza area at the entrance to the stairs and widened stairs leading from the parking lot down to the shelter will be added. A bike rack and park sign will be provided at this entrance as well. Discussions will need to continue with the City on providing signage on Grant Avenue to direct visitors to the park to the Darwin Avenue parking lot.

EEIII.      *Lighting* There is no lighting in the parking lot and the northernmost portion is not easily seen from the road. Security lighting is included in the renovation project.

Shelter

EE.          *Relocate shelter* The existing shelter will be replaced with a smaller one and the permanent rest rooms will be removed. Part of the foundation for the current shelter will be used, if possible. Two portable toilets will be located within an enclosure near the play area.

EE.          *Drinking fountain* A stand alone drinking fountain is being planned near the new shelter.

**Introduced By:**

**-DRAFT-  
RESOLUTION 2005-\_\_**

**Resolution Endorsing Proposed Facility Plan For  
Takoma-Piney Branch Park**

WHEREAS, Takoma-Piney Branch Park is a community park owned by the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) and serves residents of Wards 1 and 4, school children at Takoma Park and Piney Branch Elementary Schools and Takoma Park Middle School, and players of soccer, basketball, football, volleyball and other sports; and

WHEREAS, the park also includes the forested area known as the Takoma Woods; and

WHEREAS, the park is in need of renovation, including new play equipment, infrastructure, security improvements, access improvements and stormwater facilities; and

WHEREAS, the community has worked with M-NCPPC, school, public safety and other staff in identifying the specific improvements needed for the park; and

WHEREAS, the facilities plan presented to the City Council on June 6, 2005 by the staff of M-NCPPC meets the needs of the many stakeholders of the Takoma-Piney Branch Park.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Council of the City of Takoma Park endorses the facilities plan for Takoma-Piney Branch Park, urges its adoption by the Montgomery County Planning Board and asks that funding for the renovation project be included in the FY07 Capital Improvement Program for Montgomery County.

ADOPTED THIS \_\_\_\_<sup>th</sup> DAY OF JUNE, 2006.

ATTEST:

---

Jessie Carpenter  
City Clerk